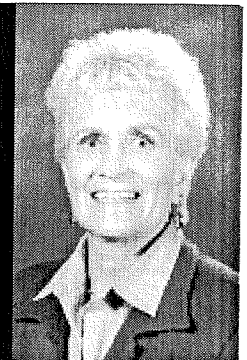


# Agriculture Update

**State Senator Beverly S. Hammerstrom**



## MI DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE SHARES IN BUDGET WOES

The state's 2004 fiscal year budget is complete, but not without cuts to almost every facet of state government. The Michigan Department of Agriculture was not spared. Below is a list of the highlights in the budget which includes both cuts and some increases for certain programs:

- The horse show grant was eliminated while the conservation district, SW Tourist Council and migrant housing labor grants were reduced for a total savings of \$294,100;
- The fruit and vegetable inspection program was reduced and the seed inspection program was eliminated cutting \$752,000 from the budget;
- Administrative savings and rental agreement adjustments combined with several fee increases will net \$457,800;
- Bovine TB funding will increase by \$773,300; and
- Over \$7 million in federal funding was included in the budget to address the Emerald Ash Borer infestation (see related article on back page).

*A complete analysis of the MDA budget may be accessed at [www.michiganlegislature.org](http://www.michiganlegislature.org) by entering Senate Bill 288.*

## PROTECTIONS FOR CENTENNIAL FARMS

A local farmer on a centennial farm in my district recently had his 100-year-old cherry trees chopped down by the local road commission. While the trees were currently in the right of way, that probably was not the case when they were originally planted over a century ago.

I am currently working on drafting legislation which would ensure that centennial farmers receive ample prior notification before any vegetation is removed from their property by local units of government. The possibility of allowing an appeals process is also being explored in order to give the farmers the opportunity to deal with the matter before historic property is destroyed.

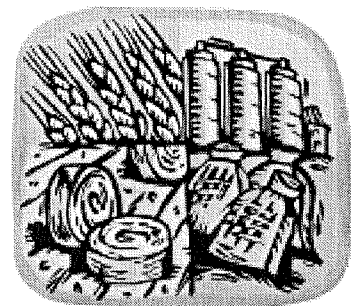
Our remarkable farms need to be protected in order to guarantee that generations another hundred years from now will be able to enjoy their beauty and history.

## ASSESSMENT TOOL HELPS FARMERS

A Michigan State University study showed that one of the state's on-farm risk assessment tool, called Farm\*A\*Syst, can help farmers determine how effectively farmstead structures, management practices, and site conditions can protect groundwater from potential contamination.

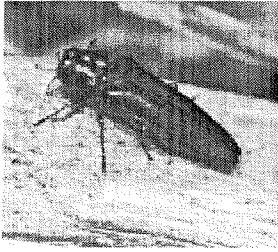
Farmers who have gone through this assessment are more likely to store pesticides in a secure facility away from other farm areas, annually test drinking water, develop emergency response plans, report hazardous pesticides and fertilizers to local emergency planning committees, and develop drift management plans.

The program is offered to Michigan farmers at no cost. For more information on Farm\*A\*Syst, contact the Michigan Department of Agriculture at 517-373-9813 or your local groundwater technician.

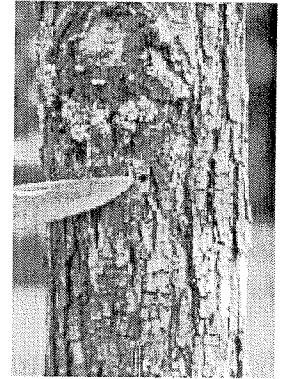


## UPDATE ON THE EMERALD ASH BORER

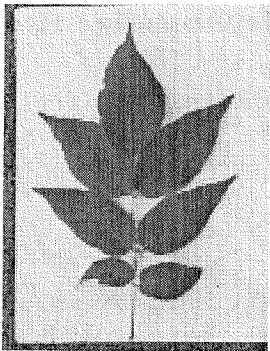
The exotic insect from Asia, known as the Emerald Ash Borer, was first discovered last summer in six Southeast Michigan counties: Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, Washtenaw and Wayne. More recently the pest has been found at sites in Genesee, Ingham, and Jackson counties.



The metallic green beetle which is usually 1/2 an inch long and 1/16 of an inch wide, are found from mid May until late July. Infestation is difficult to detect, but can be seen in the thinning of the upper third of the tree causing it to die first, with the lower portion eventually following the next year.



Adult beetles make a D-shaped exit hole with the larva causing vertical splits to occur in the bark. As a result of the highly destructive nature of this pest, the Department of Agriculture has enacted a quarantine on all ash trees and ash wood products, including firewood, throughout the affected counties to prevent its spread.



The borer's host range is limited to species of ash trees (identified by their distinctive leaves, which are located directly across from each other on the leaf stem, and bark). In Michigan, most ash tree are white, black or green. Emerald Ash Borer does not attack mountain ash, which is not related to white, black, or green ash trees.

In an effort to assist property owners in disposing of the diseased trees, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has provided a grant allowing the state to open four disposal sites in the region. For information on site locations and hours, or the spread of Emerald Ash Borer, **residents may call the hotline at 866-325-0023 or visit the state's website at [www.michigan.gov/mda](http://www.michigan.gov/mda).**

## FARMLAND PRESERVATION VIDEO AVAILABLE FOR MICHIGAN FARMERS

The Michigan Department of Agriculture, the Michigan Farmland and Community Alliance (MFCA), 13 county Farm Bureaus, and a Macomb County farmer have put together a 30-minute video, titled "Agricultural Land Preservation Tools in Michigan," to make the sometimes complex farmland preservation programs and strategies easier to understand.

Video topics include the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program (PA 116), Michigan's Purchase of Development Rights program, the Michigan Agricultural Preservation Fund, local Purchase of Development Rights programs, local planning and zoning, and farmland development rights donation to land conservancies.

To request a copy of the video or for additional information, contact the MFCA office toll-free at 800-292-2680.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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